

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Stone Works Inc

South Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Stoneworks Moves Ahead Of The Crowd

Client Profile:

StoneWorks produces stone countertops and flooring at its Hilton Head, South Carolina facility. StoneWorks sells to builders, interior designers, and architects, and has served this market segment for 15 years. The company employs 25 people.

Situation:

StoneWorks found that aggressive competitors were eating away its market share, and the company was debating whether or not to open costly showrooms in other cities in a bid to grow the business. The company wanted a better understanding of its market niche and clear differentiators for the company. StoneWorks also wanted to develop a system of tight controls for its manufacturing operations with the goal of improving scheduling and on-time delivery. While attending a Jasper County Economic Development meeting, the company's president heard a presentation by the South Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership (SCMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate. He decided to enlist the help of SCMEP to solve his marketing and operations issues.

Solution:

SCMEP performed a market analysis for StoneWorks by calling current customers, former customers, and targeted potential customers, and determined that the company had not fully penetrated its current market. Many of its current customers used multiple stone and tile suppliers for a single job, meaning StoneWorks only received a portion of the total available business. In some cases, as much as 50 percent of the work available on a job was going to StoneWorks' competitors.

SCMEP recommended StoneWorks differentiate itself based on better customer service, bolstering its claim by enhancing the dependability of delivery dates, working toward shorter overall lead times, and increasing communication throughout the sales process. In addition, SCMEP found StoneWorks could increase new business by further penetrating the current customer base rather than by building new showrooms in additional cities.

Results:

Increased market share and overall customer satisfaction.

Improved lead times and increased delivery turnaround by 50 percent.

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Decreased delivery times from 14 days to 5 days.

Established the shortest lead time and best prices of all stone fabricators in the surrounding areas.

Effectively improved competitive position in the market.

Testimonial:

"As a result of StoneWorks' new focus on improving customer service, the company has experienced an increase in market share and overall customer satisfaction."

John Baltzegar, President